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HISTORY OF THE CALIFORNIA TEXTBOOK PLAN.

California stands unique and alone among all the states of this Union in its manner of handling the textbooks for its public schools. Its constitution provides for printing the books in its own state printing office and then distributing them to the children in the schools free of cost or any charge whatever. Naturally this idea attracts a great deal of inquiry. The outline within has been prepared as a brief way to answer the many questioning persons and letters that come in continual procession to the capital.

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THE CALIFORNIA TEXTBOOK PLAN.

By the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

What is known as the California Textbook System began when the legislature of 1883 submitted the Perry amendment to the constitution, providing for state publication of textbooks, in the following words:

> "Sec. 7. The governor, superintendent of public instruction, and the principals of the state normal schools, shall constitute the State Board of Education, and shall compile, or cause to be compiled, and adopt a uniform series of textbooks for use in the common schools throughout the state. The state board may cause such textbooks, when adopted, to be printed and published by the superintendent of state printing at the state printing office, and when so printed and published to be distributed and sold at the cost price of printing, publishing, and distributing the same. The textbooks so adopted shall continue in use not less than four years."

This was adopted by the people by an almost unanimous vote in November, 1884, and was followed by the necessary enabling legislation in 1885. By 1886 the State Board had prepared and the state printer had published four books, by use of an appropriation of $170,000, of which $20,000 was for compiling and $150,000 for plant, material and labor. The feeling of that time is interesting to observe as reported by W. T. Welcker, the superintendent of public instruction, in his report to the governor in 1886:

> "The opponents of this measure (the Perry amendment), although they were not successful, were able and fiercely zealous. It was indeed a novel experiment and a great departure from all known methods. In opposition it was urged that the State Board of Education would prove incompetent; that granting their ability to discharge their appropriate duties, this was a work of expertism of a rare and special kind; that the preparation of school textbooks was a trade in itself which required years of training in that particular business.
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> "So much scandal has gathered about the supply of the public schools with textbooks, so many charges of corruption alleged to have been done by the book houses among school officers, school boards, and legislatures, that many persons would be well satisfied with textbooks published under the scheme now under consideration, even were they somewhat inferior in quality and more

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expensive in cost than those heretofore in use. But the cost of the books is one of the most gratifying things connected with the enterprise. The cost at Sacramento, as determined by the State Board of Education, of the books now furnished, is as follows:

CALIFORNIA STATE BOOKS IN 1886.

Speller and Word Analysis	20 cents
First Reader, 128 pages	15 cents
Second Reader, 228 pages	30 cents
Third Reader, 512 pages	40 cents

"The series of readers, covering substantially the same ground as those heretofore in use, will cost 85 cents, while the price of Bancroft's is $2.60; McGuffey's is $2.50; Appleton's is $3.00; and Swinton's $3.05! The series of the state costs but little more than one-third of the price of the cheapest of the above!"

Two years later the legislature, upon the advice and request of the State Board of Education, made another appropriation of $165,000, $15,000 for compiling and $150,000 for plant, materials and labor, and authorized the publication of a number of additional books. Other appropriations were made for the state printing office from time to time in subsequent years, for machinery, buildings, etc., but it is not possible to divide the expense accurately between textbooks and other state printing.

FIRST PERIOD.

This gets us fairly into the first period of the California Textbook System, which may be called the period of state publication and local authorship. It continued from 1883 to 1903, or twenty years. It was a time of contention, strife and abuse, very disquieting to those who were responsible for the enterprise.

The newness of the scheme shocked people's minds and roused their antagonism. The mechanical difficulties to be overcome were innumerable. Some editions were badly bound. Some books were poorly written. Every teacher preferred to use some favorite textbooks, that he had been brought up on perhaps, and to be obliged to give these up for something else again made loud verbal explosions on every hand. There were hundreds of book dealers in the state who were cut out of the profits of retailing books, and they were frequently heard from. The great publishing houses had agents circulating in every part of the land, whose religion it was to everlastingly damn the whole idea of state publication.

The leading educators almost universally followed suit. Institutes, clubs and associations condemned it. No educational gathering was complete that did not take a fall out of the state textbooks. Never did

any one have a good word to say of them in public. They were an impersonal sort of thing, like the weather, that any one could criticize and abuse without fear of unpleasant consequences. Doubtless, at this time, any books whatever that could have been printed by the state would have met the same fate. Yet it is worth remarking that the people of the state who do the voting in the legislature and at the polls have never failed to uphold the California plan by overwhelming majorities whenever an opportunity has come to them, even down to the present day.

However, those in charge of state publication became very uncomfortable over the general clamor. They revised the books and added to them in vain, and continually they looked for some way to improve the matter, to stop the howls. Undoubtedly, if it had not been planted deep in the constitution itself, state publication would have gone by the board during this period.

The close of the period found the state publishing fourteen textbooks, as shown in the following table:

CALIFORNIA STATE BOOKS IN 1903.

Name of Book	Cost price at Sacramento
Revised First Reader	$0 16
Revised Second Reader	28
Revised Third Reader	44
Revised Fourth Reader	53
Speller	25
Primary Number Lessons	20
Advanced Arithmetic	42
Lessons in Language	25
Revised English Grammar	47
New U. S. History (Grammar School)	81
Elementary Geography	50
Advanced Geography	1 02
Physiology	50
Civil Government	46

These books were prepared under the general direction of the State Board of Education. As a matter of fact it was quite impossible for the busy and overworked men who composed the board (the superintendent of public instruction and the presidents of the state normal schools) to do the work of writing textbooks, so various plans were tried. W. L. Willis, a teacher and newspaper man of Sacramento, prepared the speller, which remained in use for twenty years. H. C. Kinne, a veteran teacher of San Francisco, offered a set of readers which were adapted to meet the ideas of the board. F. H. Clark, of the Los Angeles high school, was engaged to prepare a history. At least a dozen other teachers of the state were engaged in one way and another in the prepa-

ration of these earliest books. Among them were Wm. Carey Jones, Frank Morton, Volney Rattan, Geo. R. Kleeberger, Sarah P. Monk, Elizabeth Wilson, Ruth Royce and Cornelia Walker.

At last, the actual work was placed upon an editor-in-chief, W. H. H. Raymond, with various expert assistants from time to time. Among these were Miss Anna C. Murphy, who is now Mrs. Edwin Markham and Mrs. Mary W. George, who is now on the faculty of the San Jose State Normal School. This editorial board worked at the state capital in connection with the office of the superintendent.

SECOND PERIOD.

During the twenty year period four million books were made and sold to the people for a million and half of dollars.

During the administration of Governor H. H. Markham, while Thomas J. Kirk was superintendent and Tirey L. Ford attorney general, the law and the constitution were very carefully scrutinized to find some way out of the woods of general complaint. It was determined that, although the books themselves must be manufactured at the state printing office, there was nothing in the constitution that required local authorship, nothing to prevent the state board from leasing or buying copyrights and plates of books already published for the use of the state printer.

This construction was hailed as a godsend. Thus could the teachers of the state have the very best books extant, from the most meritorious, successful and popular authors, selected in the open markets of the world, with the sky for a limit. The legislature of 1903 passed a new set of enabling laws, providing for the following plan:

A standing committee of the State Board of Education, composed of the governor, the superintendent and a third member elected by the board shall have direct charge of the textbook business. This state textbook committee was given a secretary with a salary of $2,500, which was regarded as a wild extravagance at the time. Under the general direction of the board it should select books, lease plates, do all necessary editorial work, and report to the board. The books when printed should be sold to the children at cost as before. A textbook appropriation of $20,000 was made for the use of the textbook committee. About half of this was still on hand when free textbooks were adopted in 1913.

The new committee went to work enthusiastically. It had difficulty at first in getting the publishers to lease the plates of their successful books. They were chary of the scheme. Inertia was to be overcome. The first royalties were high, ranging from one-fourth to one-third the list price of the book. The American Book Company had the lion's share of the adoptions. D. C. Heath & Company, the Macmillan Company, Ginn & Company, were also represented, and later Silver, Burdett

& Company, the World Book Company, and Newson & Company. This was the period of state publication and leased copyrights. It lasted from 1903 to 1913, or ten years. Public clamor somewhat died down. The book companies were ameliorated. The teachers had the same books as other people. The dealers had accepted the situation.

The chief storm center at this time was the cost of the books to the children, alleged to be caused by their frequent change. Of course, in changing the system, all the books were eventually changed, but the law requiring no change in less than four years, and no book contract for less than four years, was strictly adhered to. Several of the books had stood unchanged from a dozen to a score of years. However, it was found that when a book had been in use four years so many people were fighting it that it must needs be changed. During the latter part of this period determined efforts were made to lower the cost of the books. The publishers very generally entered into heated competition against each other and the royalties were reduced from about twenty per cent to about fifteen per cent of the list price. No headway, however, could be made in lowering the manufacturing cost. In general the price to the children was somewhat below the publishers' list price for the same book, and the book in most cases was specially adapted to California use by changes and supplements in the plates. The following table shows books, costs, royalties and prices at the close of the period:

CALIFORNIA STATE BOOKS IN 1913.

(Prices fixed March 3, 1912.)

Books	Cost of manufacture	Royalty	Cost price at Sacramento
Primer	$0 132	$0 048	$0 18
First Reader	122	048	17
Second Reader	1375	0525	19
Third Reader	19	06	25
Fourth Reader	21	09	30
Fifth Reader	21	09	30
Speller—Book I	145	025	17
Speller—Book II	145	025	17
First Book in Arithmetic	1775	0525	23
Advanced School Arithmetic	19	09	28
English Lessons*—Book I	1925	0675	26
English Lessons*—Book II	22	09	31
Introductory History	22	15	37
Brief School History	43	15	58
Introductory Geography	36	09	45
Advanced Geography	50	15	65
Civics	255	125	38
Writing—Book I	03	01	04
Writing—Book II	03	01	04
Writing—Book III	03	01	04
Writing*—Book IV	03	01	04
Writing*—Book V	03	01	04
Primer of Hygiene	15	06	21

The state printer and the state board of education in fixing prices all these years had added to the actual cost a small percentage to build up a fund to repay the state its original outlay for the printing plant. At the end of the period this accumulated school book fund amounted to about $200,000. It was then added to the appropriations for free books, and expended for that purpose.

There were four successive secretaries of the state textbook committee: J. H. Strine, ex-superintendent of Los Angeles County; Robert W. Furlong, ex-superintendent of Marin County; George L. Sackett, ex-superintendent of Ventura County; and B. S. Lobdell, a long time agent of the publishing houses. The plan followed for adopting books and getting them to the children during this period was as follows:

> "The textbook committee has direct charge of all the textbook affairs, under direction of the board. When the contract for the plates of a textbook is about to expire, this committee invites bids from publishing houses for suitable books, renewing or substituting the contract.
>
> Half a dozen or more expert teachers of the state are designated as readers, and paid about $25 each, to make a detailed study of all books offered in a given branch. The state board meets and considers the various books, giving opportunity for the agents of the books to present arguments, hearing the reports of the readers, and admitting any other testimony or opinion that may be offered. Then it chooses the book by ballot and instructs the textbook committee to make contract accordingly. The complete plates in duplicate are furnished to the state printer by the publishing company gratis, all changes desired by the committee being incorporated.
>
> The books are then manufactured in the state printing office and sold by the superintendent of public instruction to the dealers and school officers of the state. The publishers are paid quarterly from the proceeds of the sales, so much royalty for each book sold. The prices are fixed by the State Board of Education annually upon the cost reports of the state printer.
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> Before a dealer can buy books from the state office he must sign an affidavit by which he agrees that he will not sell the books at a price higher than that fixed by the State Board of Education, and also that he will not sell the books to purchasers outside the state. Upon signing it, the dealer must forward it to his county superintendent of schools, who, in turn, must endorse it and forward it to the state office."

The third and last period may be called the time of state publication, leased copyrights, and free distribution. It extends from 1913 to the present time, or a little more than two years.

Free school books was not a new idea. Superintendent Ira G. Hoitt recommended it in his report to the governor in 1888 as the cure for our textbook troubles, as follows:

> "The State of California has taken a step in the right direction in furnishing books of its own manufacture to the children at cost. It should, in my opinion, go one step farther and furnish the use of textbooks free to all children attending the public schools."

It had been proposed many times since, without hope or prospect of success, until the progressive idea began to free men's minds from precedent and convention. The administration of Governor Hiram W. Johnson took it up. The legislature of 1911 submitted to the people a constitutional amendment known as the Shanahan amendment, which came to vote in November, 1912, and despite the customary opposition was carried by a great majority. It read as follows:

> "SEC. 7. The legislature shall provide for the appointment or election of a state board of education, and said board shall provide, compile, or cause to be compiled and adopt, a uniform series of textbooks for use in the day and evening elementary schools throughout the state. The state board may cause such textbooks, when adopted, to be printed and published by the superintendent of state printing, at the state printing office; and wherever and however such textbooks may be printed and published, they shall be furnished and distributed by the state free of cost or any charge whatever, to all children attending the day and evening elementary schools of the state, under such conditions as the legislature shall prescribe. The textbooks so adopted, shall continue in use not less than four years without any change or alteration whatsoever which will require or necessitate the furnishing of new books to such pupils."

It was the intention and expectation of all who had to do with this amendment that it would not go into effect until the beginning of a new fiscal year and after proper enabling legislation had been effected. Attorney General Webb, however, after taking some time for deliberation and investigation, rendered an official opinion stating:

> *First*—That the old State Board of Education and the textbook committee are abolished and there can not be a new plan until it is created by legislative action.

Second—That the free textbooks should be furnished the schools at once, without waiting for enabling legislation or anything else.

Third—That all of the functions of the state educational system devolved upon the Superintendent of Public Instruction, as the educational representative of the people.

Thus the superintendent faced one of the most extensive, complex and difficult tasks that ever came to any man, to furnish free textbooks by hundreds of thousands to the impatient schools and children of a great state; to do it without funds, without precedent, without previous plan, and at once. He went ahead as best he could. The state printer put his great plant to work day and night at fullest capacity. The legislature made some emergency appropriations. A scheme of distribution was devised that worked well and that has never been changed in principle since. The books went out in carload lots and reached every nook and corner of the state, in every desert, and mountain and plain, from Oregon to Mexico. The teachers of the state were very helpful and patient, making their first demands as light as possible, and when necessary doing without the books that were slow in making.

During this time the state printer was Friend Wm. Richardson, a practical newspaper man with a talent for organization. He was of great service to the state in the early days of the free textbook enterprise. By a careful cost finding system and rigid supervision of detail he substantially reduced the cost of manufacture time after time.

The new State Board of Education was organized in the fall of 1913. It was a lay board of seven members, appointed by the governor and generously furnished with appropriations for remuneration, expenses, equipment and all the expert assistants and office helpers that it desires. Up to the present time it has made no changes in textbooks or in manner of handling them, but it is admirably adapted for investigating and wisely choosing books through its experts in future, and for handling the commercial and industrial problems that come up in connection with their production, distribution, and use. The whole thing is simply a matter of state enterprise. If it can be efficiently and honestly and economically administered it will be successful and a great blessing to the people. Otherwise—well, then it will be to the contrary!

The following table shows the books manufactured at the present time, July, 1915, with their cost and selling price to those who buy. Private schools like to buy the state books. A very few parents buy, so that their children can have duplicate books at home, or so that they can use individual books. Sometimes children buy to replace those they have themselves lost or destroyed. Books are not sold outside the state.

CALIFORNIA STATE BOOKS IN 1915.

Name of book	Cost and selling price at Sacramento
Primer	$0 15
First Reader	15
Second Reader	18
Third Reader	19
Fourth Reader	24
Fifth Reader	24
Speller—One	14
Speller—Two	14
First Arithmetic	18
Advanced Arithmetic	23
New English Lessons—One	23
New English Lessons—Two	26
Introductory History	31
Brief History	41
Introductory Geography	32
Advanced Geography	54
Hygiene	18
Civics	31
Writing Book—One	4
Writing Book—Two	4
Writing Book—Three	4
Writing Book—Four	4
Writing Book—Five	4

The following table will be of interest in this connection, showing the trade name of each of the California books with its publisher and the price at which it is delivered to the children by the publisher:

EQUIVALENT OF CALIFORNIA STATE BOOKS IN 1915.

Original name of book	Publisher	Publisher's list price
Aldine Primer	Newson & Co.	$0 32
Progressive Road to Reading	Silver, Burdett & Co.	32
Brooks Second Reader	American Book Co.	35
Brooks Third Reader	American Book Co.	40
Stepping Stones to Literature	Silver, Burdett & Co.	60
Stepping Stones to Literature	Silver, Burdett & Co.	60
Chancellors Spellers—Book I	The Macmillan Co.	25
Chancellors Spellers—Book II	The Macmillan Co.	30
McClymonds & Jones El. Arithmetic	American Book Co.	35
McClymonds & Jones Essentials in Arith.	American Book Co.	60
Guide Books to English—Book I	Silver, Burdett & Co.	45
Guide Books to English—Book II	Silver, Burdett & Co.	60
Thomas Introductory History	D. C. Heath & Co.	65
McMasters Brief History of the U. S.	American Book Co.	1 00
Tarr & McMurrays Intro. Geography	The Macmillan Co.	60
Tarr & McMurrays Advanced Geography	The Macmillan Co.	1 00
Dunns Community and the Citizen	D. C. Heath & Co.	75
Spencer Sons Writing—Book I	American Book Co.	05
Spencer Sons Writing—Book II	American Book Co.	05
Spencer Sons Writing—Book III	American Book Co.	05
Spencer Sons Writing—Book IV	American Book Co.	05
Spencer Sons Writing—Book V	American Book Co.	05
Primer of Hygiene	World Book Company	40

It will be seen that the California prices are very much lower than those of the regular publishers. The comparison is not quite fair, perhaps, in that some of the overhead expense, as the salaries of some managers and editors, the cost of exploiting, the interest and depreciation of plant, the losses by unsuccessful books, is not included in reckoning the California costs. We believe, however, that the state is getting its service of textbooks at a saving of at least 25 per cent, everything considered, over what it would cost if given to private publishers in the regular way.

Certainly the state would not recede from or give up its textbook system under any circumstances. It is running more smoothly, giving more general satisfaction and meeting with less opposition than ever before in its history. The teachers find great comfort in being relieved of the task of badgering the children to buy books and in being able, for the most part, to start their classes all together fully equipped on the first day of the term. It is alleged by some that our books are not so well bound as those of private publishers. We find, however, that they last as long in actual use as any books.

The present method of adopting, making and distributing textbooks may be briefly sketched thus:

The preliminary investigation of the textbooks offered to the State Board of Education by publishers and authors for adoption is made by the three commissioners of education and the superintendent of public instruction. They spend some months in the study and are free to consult and to employ expert teachers actually at work in the schools of the state upon any phase of the examination in which they need help. Finally they report to the board. The board gives audience to the representatives of every book offered, questions them, listens to briefs, recommendations and all other testimony offered. It listens to the reports of the commissioners and the expert readers. At last the board makes choice and contracts for the use of the plates of the successful books for four or more years, at a certain royalty for each book distributed, stipulating any additions, changes or California supplements that may be desired at the expense of the publishers. The publisher furnishes the completed plates in duplicate to the state printer, who prints the books in 25,000 editions and turns them over to the warehouse, from which they are distributed to the schools upon the order of the superintendent of public instruction.

At the end of each year the teacher or principal sends in a requisition for the additional books she will need for the next year, accompanied by a list of the books she already has. In response, the books are sent out to the school clerks by the superintendent, with parcel post, express or freight rates prepaid by the state. Some shipments consist of half a dozen books by mail to a remote school on a mountain top; others are

whole carloads to some city in the valley or by the sea. Later supplemental requisitions are filled when necessary. The necessity and the reasonableness of the demands are verified by requiring all the requisitions to be approved and signed by the clerk of the school and the county superintendent.

When the clerk receives the books for his school he turns them over to the teacher, principal or superintendent, who in turn distributes them to the children, keeps a record of them and is responsible for their care and preservation. Annual reports are made, showing the number of books on hand and their condition. At the end of the term the books are, or should be, collected, repaired, recovered, fumigated, ready for redistribution at the opening of the new term.

It is a most encouraging thing that the teachers have accepted the responsibility of the free textbooks wisely and moderately. No selfish grabbing for unreasonable supplies of books is apparent, and the books usually are carefully used. The cost for the first two and one-half years, including the original stocking up of the schools, was roughly half a million dollars. There are about 400,000 children in the schools, so the total cost per child per year is approximately fifty cents. This includes the expense of distribution, but does not include such additional or supplementary books as are purchased by the local schools. The law forbids requiring pupils to buy any books whatever. The cost in future seems likely to be about $200,000 per year, if the present policy is pursued.

A question for the future to settle is the matter of individual ownership of school books. Hygienically it would be preferable for a book never to be used by more than one child. Many people contend that a book once issued should belong to the individual child and never be passed on to another. So far, the State has not seen its way clear to throw away the service that still remains in many of the books after they have been once used, the value of which would range somewhere between fifty and one hundred thousand dollars per year, probably. It is possible that some plan may be evolved for issuing books in cheap pamphlet form, a week or a month at a time, to put in the children's hands for a while and then destroy.

The question of royalty is another interesting one for the future. The royalty at present is about 15 per cent of the list price of the books, or about 50 per cent of the cost of manufacture. Since the beginning of the plan for leasing copyrights the state has expended $530.756.11 for royalties, or something less than fifty thousand dollars per year. To the ordinary man it seems as if this great sum could be saved in future if the books were written by our own California teachers. It looks like velvet. However, there are two sides to the matter. As a matter of fact the books, in the past, cost quite as much under the local authorship

plan as they have since under the leased copyright plan. It is possible that we could do better now, however, since we have more experience and improved conditions. Moreover, there is a law upon the statute books requiring texts made in California to be adopted when they are of equal merit and the same cost. But local authors have to be paid in one way or another, and the editorial work, the mechanical work of preparing the books for publication, has seemed in the past somehow to eat up the velvet. The royalty represents the author's compensation, the expense of preparing the plates, the cost of exploiting the book into a well-known and popular one that California would accept, the loss by unsuccessful books and the publishers' percentage of profit. There is room for quite a pretty argument as to whether or not the payment of royalty is the cheapest and best way to try out multitudes of textbooks in order to secure the successful and workable ones. Probably the future will see a course somewhere between the two extremes. Some books lend themselves well to local preparation and others are born, not made. It is well to leave the whole matter in an elastic form, ready to adapt to future ideas, for the future will bring changes no fewer than those of the past.

It is impossible to forecast the nature and the extent of those changes, however, and now that we have brought the thing up to date our task is done, and we may leave the future to take care of itself.

EDWARD HYATT.

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